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ARTS COUNCIL NAPA VALLEY Meet the Makers

Napa's creative community shines bright in Arts Council photography exhibition

By Christy Bors

In its foundation, Napa Valley carries creative people who quietly illuminate their community. Often they work exclusively behind the lens, with roles varying from teacher to mother, musician to activist, and many roles in between. From October 6 – 31st, Arts Council Napa Valley (ACNV) will present portraits of a selection of Napa's creative "makers" in a photo exhibition, entitled Meet the Makers, showing at Mumm Napa. Exhibition photographers Dona Kopol Bonick, Suzanne Becker Bronk, Kristine Cummins, and Chick Harrity offer the public a glimpse into the lives of over 60 creative locals, making a difference in the valley they call home.



Meet the Makers' reception on October 15th marks the start of Napa Valley ARTS 2010, ACNV's inaugural month-long celebration of arts and culture, with a tagline and philosophy of "Cultivating Creativity." In partnership with ACNV, Napa Valley's arts organizations, groups, galleries, wineries and schools will present over 100 arts and culture events from October 15 – November 14th, with daily events posted on www.nvarts.org and in a print catalog available in early October. Early on in the ARTS 2010 planning process, ACNV dreamt of presenting an art exhibition that

would shine a light on the behind-the-scenes lives of Napa's creative community. "Instead of showing only the end result of the creative process (paintings, sculptures, textiles, etc.), I wanted to show the faces of the creators themselves," explains Kristina Young, ACNV acting executive director. "The galleries in Mumm Napa celebrate photography, so creating a show of photographic portraits seemed a natural fit."



Meet the Makers is truly a unique portraiture showcase. The subjects are a multigenerational collection of creative influences, ranging from high-school students at sweet-16, to 92 year-old arts pioneer Rene di Rosa. "Napa Valley is indeed full of characters, as well as character," explains exhibitor

Chick Harrity. “Most of these characters love and appreciate living and creating in this Valley, and that's what makes it great.”

The photos themselves are expressive, emotional, and surprisingly intimate—most give the viewer the feeling of being brought in on a secret—and one can only imagine the stories held in the hearts of these Napa greats.



The four photographers' varying perspectives on portraiture round out the exhibition—and what varied perspectives the subjects bring. Harrity brings a photography career surpassing fifty years, with past photojournalist assignments that range from Associated Press projects to White House coverage, and US News and World Report Magazines. Suzanne Becker Bronk, a former arts administrator for Stanford University, is also the former photography student of Ron Rogers and Ron Zak of Napa Valley College, both of whom are featured in the exhibition. Dona Kopol Bonick, a former art instructor, carries with her a long legacy of Napa

arts' heritage, along with her husband, John Bonick. New to the photography scene Kristine Cummins, web designer and alternative arts organization Wandering Rose advocate, gives the show a glimpse into Napa's creative youth—a population just as emergent as the photographer herself. “It is an honor to be invited inside of their lives,” explains Cummins.

The generational differences between the photographers, and their varied interpretations on the role of “maker,” are what truly make *Meet the Makers* a fine art portraiture exhibition. Exhibitor Suzanne Becker Bronk explains, “Photography is very personal. My images of these intriguing artists are as much about how I see the world, as they are about the artists as subjects.”



Featured alongside the portraits at Mumm Napa will be a special audio tour of selected subject interviews and responsive creations by the affectionately dubbed “Art Girls”, students of Napa art educator Lynne Tuft. The Art Girls, Hannah Bradford, Ruby Harvey, and Grace Murphy, are three pre-teen artists who have been mentored by Tuft for the past several years. Their interviews will be available via the exhibitions' catalog using Smart Phone QR code technology.

While the phrase “by the people, for the people,” might seem an exaggeration, *Meet the Makers* truly is a celebration of community, and an honor to those who make it: By the community, for the community.



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“Photography is always a collaboration [between the subject and the photographer],” Dona Kopol Bonick says. “Truly. It always is. [The subjects] present themselves, and [the photographer] chooses the moment to capture. It is a team effort.” Resting her arm delicately against the arm of an oak bench, Bonick gives a slight smile, seeming to recollect a captured moment or two. Little does she know she has captured, along with Suzanne Becker Bronk, Kristine Cummins, and Chick Harrity, more than a moment-- they have captured a glimpse into the creative soul of Napa.



Meet the Makers runs from October 6 – 31st, 2010, at Mumm Napa in Rutherford, with a public gallery reception on Friday, October 15th, from 7-8:30 p.m. Tickets for public reception and Preview Gala (6:00-7:00 p.m.) are available via www.nvarts.org or at the door. For more information about Napa Valley ARTS 2010 or the Meet the Makers showcase, contact Arts Council Napa Valley at (707) 257-2117.

Photo subjects and credits (in order presented):
Layla Fanucci by Chick Harrity; *Jakey Lee* by Kristine Cummins; *Oscar Aguilar Olea & Art Girls* by Suzanne Becker Bronk; *Robilee-Frederick* by Dona Kopol Bonick

Arts Council Napa Valley receives funding from the California Arts Council's [Creating Public Value Program](#) which supports arts organizations in rural or underserved communities, the [Artists in Schools Program](#) which supports residencies in schools, and the [State-Local Partnership Program](#) (SLPP) which supports county arts councils. SLPP is managed by Rob Lautz, rlautz@cac.ca.gov.



Meet the Makers: Alphabetical Subject List

Johnny A. (Apodaca)	Alexander M. Lydon
Michael & Daria Adams	David Magna
Oscar Aguilar Olea	Sally & Jeff Manfredi
David Alosi	Ray Manzarek
Jocelyn Audette	Carlo Marchiori
Serf B.	Kelly McCann
Lisette Banda	Richard Mendelson
Heidi Barrett	Michelle Moore
John Bonick	Margrit Mondavi
Harry Cadelago	Jiin Nichols
Gail Chase Bien	Chuck O'Rear
Eleanor Coppola	Castor Pollux
Hugo Corro & Sierra Minchaca	Asher Raboy
Jonathan Costa	Ron Rogers
Rebecca Dant	Rene di Rosa & Richard Reisman
Lewis DeSoto	Alex Shantz
Sean Des Jardins	Marie E. Shelley
Olivia Everett	Paul R. Slack
Layla Fanucci	Julio Soriano
Robilee Frederick	Barbara Stafford
Herb Gibson	Ann Trinca
Ed Grant & Kristi Rene	Lynne Tuft
John Hannaford	Kristen Van Dyke
Yvonne Henry	Richard Von Saal
Lowell Herrero	Lori Wear
Sabine Hirsohn	Patrick “Pappy” Williams
Hillary Homzie	Nancy Willis
Gordon Huether	Beverly Wilson
Dinah Cross James	Paul Youngman
Rob Keller	Ron Zak
Jennifer King	Chris Zinn
Jakey Lee	